



EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAM  
INNOVATIONS  
CHARITY SOCIETY

# ANNUAL REPORT



## **EPIC - CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Please feel free to contact us with any questions or requests you may have.*

### **Educational Program Innovations Charity (EPIC) Society**

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### **Youth Peer & Outreach and Parents PEACE**

Email: **youthpeerprogram@live.com**  
Location: **Youth Peer Centre  
Sydney Adult High School, downstairs**  
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### **EPIC Youth Peer Video**

YouTube Search: **Youth Peer Program - EPIC**

### **CRA Charities Listing**

Google Search: **CRA Charities Listings  
Registration #89214 9964  
Educational Program Innovations Charity Society**



# CHARITY OVERVIEW

2021

## MISSION

The mission of **Educational Program Innovations Charity Society** is to advance marginalized learners through innovation, empathy, volunteerism, diversity and partnership.

## FOCUS

The charity's focus is on children and youth at risk, especially those from marginalized cultures, who are self-motivated but require enhanced accommodation and support to ensure attainable social adaptation and educational advancement.

## ACTIVITIES

The charity's activities include:

- educational projects filling voids in services for disadvantaged and high-risk learners
- tutoring, mentoring, and creative arts services
- high school grad humanity/scholarship awards; post-secondary volunteerism awards
- secondary and post-secondary field-of-study work internships
- educational initiatives serving marginalized youth and their caregivers
- development of strategies/materials promoting social adaptation and cultural affirmation
- networking with other charities to promote parallel initiatives in other Canadian sites

## HISTORY

EPIC was founded in Nova Scotia in 1996 by Barry Waldman. At that time, he was Director of Unama'ki Training & Education Centre (TEC) in Eskasoni First Nation, an alternative high school and adult education facility which he had nurtured from a 1-year pilot project to a mainstay of the community. Through daily contact with marginalized learners, Barry came to understand the nature of their challenges and the potential loss of life-transforming opportunities if sufficient program funding could not be accessed. He envisioned a community-based charitable organization, fully supported for its innovative approaches, rapid and flexible in its responses to identified needs, effective in recruiting and engaging young volunteers, and transformative in delivering programs for the advancement of high risk participants who were otherwise likely to fall through the cracks of agency services. His solution was to form **Educational Program Innovations Charity Society** and to oversee its youth-centred charitable activities as a volunteer so that there would be virtually no administrative costs. He continues to volunteer as EPIC's Executive Director and Board Finance Director. EPIC has been fortunate to recruit and retain outstanding and dedicated Board members who are distinguished in their fields and volunteer substantial talents and resources to ensure the fulfillment of EPIC's mission. For 17 years concluding in 2014, the Donner Canadian Foundation provided national non-profit awards for Excellence in the Delivery of Social Services. In the final 9 years, EPIC applied and was evaluated rigorously through a 2-stage Fraser Institute protocol. In that period, EPIC received more cash award recognition from the Donner Foundation than any of the other 2,000 competing Canadian charitable programs. EPIC received the Donner Foundation Award 6 times as the highest achieving non-profit in the Services for Children category. In both 2010 and 2013, EPIC received the highest Donner Foundation Award across all social service categories, and in 2012 received the Canada-wide Peter Drucker Award for the most consistent record of excellence and innovation in the management and delivery of non-profit program services.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EPIC's Policies and Procedures state: *"The Board shall be made up of collaborative, dedicated, and open-minded individuals with a commitment to achieving the broadest community benefit, and who each effectively represent the needs of marginalized learners from a unique perspective."* EPIC's volunteer Board operates by consensus, and great effort is made to ensure 100% attendance at Board meetings. Board members also fulfill the five Executive positions. Board members are encouraged to serve the charity on an ongoing basis, so two-year terms are renewed automatically unless a Board member requests departure.

### CHAIR / PLANNING DIRECTOR

**Janet Robinson**



Janet is a self-employed workplace facilitator who works on contract to help struggling women find jobs. She was formerly a Counsellor for the Ann Terry Society and served on the Board of New Dawn Enterprises. She currently works part-time for the Old Sydney Society. She has a wealth of community-based career and volunteer experience including valued assistance with the Celtic Colours International Festival. She has served on the EPIC Board since 2005.

### VICE-CHAIR / VALUES & ETHICS DIRECTOR

**Dana Feltmate**



Dana is the Minister of the United Protestant Church in Sydney River, a church which has grown rapidly in congregation and community service under his leadership. Dana and his wife Delores have been instrumental in enhancing provincial services to children in care. They have also been foster parents to 11 children including a daughter they adopted. He has worked tirelessly for the United Church Children and Youth in Crisis working group and the Cape Breton Child Welfare Board. He joined the EPIC Board in 2016.

### VICE-CHAIR / PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

**Barb Donovan**



Barb has been an integral part of EPIC for 23 years. She was pivotal in the development of the Youth Peer Program as Director for 13 years, Breakthrough Facilitator & Back-up for 6 years, and has served on EPIC's Board as Programs Director since 2016. She is considered by EPIC and most others she has worked with to be extraordinarily gifted in fostering healthy relationships with marginalized youth and continues in her retirement to help former Youth Peer participants overcome social challenges.

### TREASURER / FINANCE DIRECTOR

**Barry Waldman**



Barry is EPIC's founder, Executive Director, and supervisor of its programs. He considers himself retired, but oversees EPIC's operations and finances as a volunteer, a role he has sustained since 1996. He was formerly a carpenter, teacher, educational administrator and consultant, who spent most of his career serving the Eskasoni School Board. In 2008 he received the Cape Breton United Way Harvey Webber Volunteerism Award and in 2013 received Cape Breton's Tom Miller Human Rights Award for services to the disadvantaged. He joined the Board in 2007.

### SECRETARY / COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

**Nancy S. M. Waldman**



Nancy is a writer, artist, and retired psychiatric nurse who holds a Master's Degree in Nursing. She has served on the Board of Cape Breton Mental Health Association, is one of three founders and editors for Third Person Press which nurtures and promotes emerging Cape Breton speculative fiction writers, and has created By and By Press which features her own short story collections and novels. She has volunteered for EPIC since 2000 and has served as EPIC webmaster ever since. She joined the Board in 2007.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2021

## **Youth Peer**

Youth Peer is a free, 2½ hour after-school program for youth ages 8-18 in Cape Breton Regional Municipality referred by EPIC's 34 community agency partners to address social and academic challenges. Each day, up to 15 youth at risk are matched 1-to-1 with their own volunteer tutor-mentor who was recruited from university, college, or high school to help the youth overcome educational challenges and personal obstacles and engage in positive social activities like art, music, workshops, and educational games. The relationship that develops between high-risk youth and tutor-mentors is magical. Participants advance rapidly in social skills and academic achievements. Troubled youth begin to feel and behave like regular kids in the structured, yet fun, environment. Youth, volunteers, and staff interact like a wonderful family, which results in reduced risks to self, family, and community; enhancement of school attachment and achievement; and increased self-esteem and positive behaviours. While Youth Peer operated as a hybrid onsite-online program in the pandemic 2020-2021 year, EPIC hopes to return in 2021-2022 to full in-person service for 70 marginalized youth referred from 15 different schools. If pandemic health issues re-emerge, Youth Peer will adapt accordingly to optimize social and academic benefits for youth participants while sustaining a healthy environment for all.

## **Youth Peer Outreach**

Youth Peer Outreach evolved from community requests and the opportunity to collaborate with SchoolsPlus in partnership with Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education. The 2020-2021 school-year was the fourth full year of weekly 2-hour Youth Peer Outreach services in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside. Adherence to health protocols in 2020-2021 reduced onsite participant numbers by 40%. Fortunately, EPIC was able to create then expand Youth Peer Online which enabled Youth Peer and Outreach to deliver over 95% of the tutor-mentor matches carried out in the previous record year. Tutor-mentor matching for high risk youth ages 10-16 is projected to continue in the 2021-2022 school-year on Mondays at Oceanview Education Centre in Glace Bay, on Tuesdays at Breton Education Centre in New Waterford, and on Wednesdays at Memorial High in Sydney Mines. Outreach staff are well prepared to move the program online in 2021-2022 if re-emergence of the pandemic necessitates constraints on in-person activities. Outreach will continue to optimize social and academic advancement of marginalized youth.

## **Parents PEACE** (*Practicing Esteem-building Acceptance Communication & Evaluation*)

Parents PEACE is a free, ongoing parenting workshop, open to any caregivers with school-aged children. In "normal" school years, parents meet Monday nights from 6:30 - 8:30 at the Youth Peer Centre, downstairs in the Sydney Adult High School. In the 2020-2021 pandemic year, when EPIC was not allowed to have parents in the facility, the program operated as a hybrid between a rented community space and online. Attendance remained consistent in both with an average of 6 parents per session. Several of EPIC partner agencies volunteered to facilitate discussions on bullying, stress management, and gender identity. Parent challenges in general were exacerbated by the pandemic, so meeting in any form was greatly appreciated. Parents PEACE continues to help parents better understand their interactions with their children and put this knowledge to work for them, providing parents with practical tools and a safe place to discuss critical issues. New participants are always welcomed and there is no start or stop date. The Facilitator obtains parent input on topics of interest, either facilitating those herself or arranging for knowledgeable community agencies speakers to present relevant ideas for discussion. All sessions focus on practical strategies for coping with real parenting problems.

## PROGRAM NEED

2021

For many years, social agency staff in CBRM (**Cape Breton Regional Municipality**) have conveyed frustration with the severity of youth cases they handle and isolation dealing with compound social dysfunction factors. The youth immersed in social conflict have tended to be both Mental Health and Child Welfare clients who have been suspended from school and are deficient in social skills, impulse control, and self-esteem. The areas served by EPIC experience all the conditions that place communities at high-risk of these kinds of social maladaptations: comparatively low education levels, high unemployment, and a high percentage living in poverty (*Nova Scotia Government*). The percentage of CBRM adults who have completed a university degree or diploma is 34% lower than the national average (*Community Foundation of Nova Scotia*). The average unemployment rate in CBRM over the past 20 years – 15%, is more than double the national average – 7% over the same period (*Statistics Canada*). A pan-Canadian comparison of CBRM with similarly-sized cities in 6 other provinces (Kelowna, BC; Red Deer, AB; Regina, SK; Thunder Bay, ON; Saint John, NB; and St. John's, NF) revealed that average family income in CBRM is 28% lower (*Environics Analytics*). Including communities like Eskasoni with a child poverty rate of 73%, the average child poverty rate across CBRM is 29%, which is 53% higher than the Canadian average of 19% (*Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*). Unfortunately, despite encouraging signs related to international university students, the overall demographics in CBRM are not improving. The bleak employment outlook has driven the population of CBRM spiralling downward for decades with an average annual population decline of 1% (*Statistics Canada*).

The youth referred by social agency partners to EPIC's core program – Youth Peer & Outreach – are prioritized for being at high risk of social conflict and academic challenges. As a result, the average poverty rate in this after-school program for 8-18 year-olds is 89%. If EPIC did not provide free transportation, the majority of participants would be unable to attend. The free snacks provided are often the closest thing to a nutritional meal that day. EPIC's goal in the delivery of Youth Peer & Outreach is to provide acceptance, support, encouragement, and a transformative safe haven environment for youth who might otherwise be headed for a lifetime of dysfunction.

## RESOURCE ALLOCATION

2021

The table below provides a breakdown of costs allocated by program category for EPIC's most recent fiscal year, from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Additional revenue and expense details are provided in EPIC's financial statements conducted by MNP Accounting and are available each year on EPIC's website by November... <http://epiccharity.com>

EXPENSES BY PROGRAM	COST
Youth Peer, Outreach, & Online Program	174,350
* Administration	9,623
Parents PEACE Program	3,770
Scholarships and Awards	3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$190,743</b>

*\* EPIC categorizes the following expenses entirely as Administration costs: external audit, insurance, donations to fundraisers for others, directors' travel, surveys, bank charges, dues and fees. All other costs involved in overseeing program activities including housing the programs and charity, and managing operational finances, continue to be provided as in-kind services as itemized below. Fundraising is carried out almost exclusively through proposal writing as part of Supervision and provided as an in-kind service by the volunteer Executive Director.*

## IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS \*

2021

CATEGORY	CONTRIBUTOR	CALCULATIONS	COST
Supervision	Executive Director	25 hrs/wk x 44 wks x \$45/hr	49,500
	School Outreach Facilitators	3 x 3 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$35/hr	12,600
	Board Members	2 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$45/hr	3,600
	Partner Agency Members	2 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$40/hr	3,200
Youth Services	Tutor-Mentor Volunteers	1600 youth matches x 2 hrs x \$15/hr	48,000
Program Facilities	Sydney - Adult High	2 class & 2 office x 10 mos x \$500/mo	20,000
	Glace Bay - Oceanview Mid	1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo	5,000
	New Waterford - Breton Mid	1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo	5,000
	Northside - Memorial High	1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo	5,000
Financial Services	Executive Director	4 hrs/wk x 44 wks x \$45/hr	7,920
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$159,820</b>

*\* All calculations are based on wage rates and market value costs that would apply if these services were not provided as in-kind contributions. The comparable totals for charity expenses and in-kind contributions are consistent with the long-established trend in the Youth Peer & Outreach Program that the number of paid staff hours closely matches the number of volunteer hours.*

## PROGRAM OUTPUTS 2021

Youth Peer & Outreach Program	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Management Team Partner Agencies #	34	34	34
Schools & Other Referral Sources #	26	28	30
Youth Participant Referrals #	116	134	136
Active Youth Participants #	92	100	94
Tutor-Mentor Volunteers Trained #	111	128	106
Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	93	101	91
Average Improvement in Protective Factors %	9%	11%	14%

Site	Output Indicators	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Sydney & Online	Active Youth Participant #	72	71	68
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	73	71	62
	Protective Factor Improvement %	7%	11%	14%
Glace Bay	Active Youth Participant #	6	9	11
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	6	11	12
	Protective Factor Improvement %	23%	14%	11%
New Waterford	Active Youth Participant #	6	9	8
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	5	12	8
	Protective Factor Improvement %	14%	15%	13%
Northside	Active Youth Participant #	7	11	7
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	9	13	9
	Protective Factor Improvement %	20%	10%	11%

*Protective factor changes are calculated on 20 evidence-based risk indicators in SEGWAY (Social Emotional Growth & Wellness Assessment of Youth) with raw scores ranging from -40 to +40. To adjust for unintended staff bias and attribution to other sources, 50% improvement is considered the maximum for any participant.*

Site	Output Intensity	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Sydney	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	1303	1174	1302
Glace Bay	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	85	156	163
New Waterford	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	117	172	98
Northside	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	107	188	105
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1612</b>	<b>1690</b>	<b>1668</b>

Marginalization Demographics	Youth Peer & Outreach	CBRM *
Child Poverty (school-aged children)	89%	29%
Indigenous (on-reserve and off-reserve)	12%	4%
Visible Minority (African / Asian / Middle Eastern descent)	2%	3%
Transgender (non-birth gender identity)	4%	0.4%

*\* Annual data for Youth Peer, Outreach, and Online programs, updated monthly, is compared to the most recent annual data from Statistics Canada for CBRM (Cape Breton Regional Municipality).*

# PROGRAM OUTCOMES

2021

## **Youth Peer & Youth Peer Outreach**

In school-year 2020-2021, 125 high-risk Youth Peer and Outreach participants were referred by 6 partner agencies, and volunteers were referred by 4 other partners. Guidance Counsellors referred 71% of Youth Peer-Sydney participants from 15 different schools in Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education. SchoolsPlus referred 90% of Outreach participants from 5 additional schools. Youth Peer in Sydney operated 5 days per week averaging 9 tutor-mentor matches per day onsite and 3 per day online. Outreach operated 1 day per week each in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside, averaging 5 tutor-mentor matches at each site. There were 129 tutor-mentors trained and 96 actively volunteered, 60% from 5 different high schools, 28% from Cape Breton University, 7% from Nova Scotia Community College, and 5% from other universities. The total number of tutor-mentor matches was 1,612, more than 95% of the 22-year record of 1,690. The site breakdown – Sydney/Online-1,303, Glace Bay-85, New Waterford-117, and Northside-107 – reflects 6,448 hours of positive youth academic and social activities. Over 90% of youth participants were assessed at all 4 sites as being at high risk. Despite the pandemic, attendance was higher than usual and EPIC was highly successful in generating environments that uplifted marginalized youth to feel and behave like regular kids. Shifting to online created additional challenges, but Youth Peer & Outreach students continued to advance socially and academically, even while staff and administrators of their schools reported significant school-wide declines in attendance and academic performance.

## **Program Changes**

In 2020-2021, the pandemic necessitated offering Youth Peer Online to 26% of students who could not be accommodated onsite within health protocols. Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside sites were all limited to 6 tutor-mentor matches per classroom, all from one school, with youth and volunteers wearing masks and having plexiglass to separate students from volunteers. Pandemic constraints reduced onsite matches by 30% for Youth Peer and 40% for Outreach. In late April, when the Province closed schools for 5 weeks, Youth Peer Online expanded to provide services for 32 more students. The net effect was that Youth Peer served only 85% as many students as in previous years, but carried out over 95% of the tutor-mentor matches of the all-time record year. Many students, restricted in school to one classroom, wearing a mask, and having limited peer interactions, told staff they looked forward all week to their Youth Peer, Outreach, or Online session. In May, staff assessed 85 marginalized youth, 65 in Sydney and 20 in Outreach, using SEGWAY (**S**ocial **E**motional **G**rowth & **W**ellness **A**ssessment of **Y**outh) which tracks behavioural changes across 20 research-validated risk indicators. Final results, reflecting changes over 8 months, confirmed what staff had observed anecdotally that ~90% of participants were internalizing protective factors that counteract social conflict risks. The average assessed change in social conflict risk indicators was a 9% improvement in pro-social behaviours. Overall, for every 4 hours students attended Youth Peer, there was a 1% average improvement in protective factors to counteract social risk.

## **Parents PEACE**

An average of 6 parents participated in weekly Parents PEACE evening sessions, in rented space and online, improving parenting skills and enhancing capacity to support their children. Five of EPIC's partner agencies engaged parents in interactive discussions on critical parenting issues which provided parents with greater insights for helping their children, and nurtured support from other parents to navigate family pandemic challenges.

## **OUTPUT GOALS**

2021

### **Short-term**

EPIC hopes to sustain 1500+ youth matches each school-year, irrespective of constraints on in-person activities as currently encountered due to pandemic-related health protocols.

### **Mid-term**

Implementation of Youth Peer Outreach to 3 under-served communities for 4 school-years has enabled EPIC to provide services to most schools in CBRM. This has demanded strong partnerships in school-based sites and a relentless commitment to serving the most marginalized youth. As a mid-term goal, we endeavour to ensure that youth referred to Youth Peer are those at highest social conflict and academic risk, as we know that sustained engagement with youth volunteers is their best hope of transformative change.

### **Long-term**

EPIC seeks long-term resources to ensure optimal operation of 4 sites. The Succession Plan is to increase donations and other non-government revenue, ensuring EPIC can hire an effective replacement whenever the volunteer Executive Director is unable to continue.

## **PROGRAM CHALLENGES**

2021

In 2020-2021, EPIC faced several unique challenges in operating Youth Peer & Outreach:

\* Out of School Time funding by Nova Scotia Education, contracting EPIC to partner with Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education, has now run successfully for 4 years. EPIC believes that sustained positive impact requires EPIC's full responsibility for daily operations. EPIC's partnership with SchoolsPlus social workers enhances the relationship with schools, ensures rent-free program space, and assists with the identification of target youth and volunteers. Despite limited control over site protocols, EPIC has been able to nurture a partnership beneficial to youth, volunteers, parents, staff, and school personnel.

\* In 2020-2021, health protocols restricted the number of tutor-mentor matches to 6 per classroom, with students from a single school and tutors from another. This reduced Youth Peer onsite by 30% and Outreach by 40%. The school furthest from the Youth Peer Centre also had unreliable internet service. EPIC concluded that the compelling needs of those students outweighed the transportation expense, so those costs increased even with a reduced number of youth onsite. Only half the schools previously served by Youth Peer could be accommodated onsite, so EPIC created Youth Peer Online with an Online Coordinator and 2 Assistants. This doubled the number of schools served and provided online programming for 26% of students. In late April, 2021, pandemic concerns closed schools for 5 weeks. EPIC rapidly moved Youth Peer and Outreach to Online. Ultimately, the total number of tutor-mentor matches for the year was over 95% of the previous record.

\* Health protocols in 2020-2021 prevented Parents PEACE participants from entering the Youth Peer Centre, which is located in a school facility. To sustain the program, EPIC had to rent a community space for fall and spring with online program delivery in the winter. Participation remained high because parent challenges were intensified by the pandemic and parents desperately needed sound advice for helping their struggling children and support from others facing similar challenges.

\* Early in 2021, EPIC's largest funder confirmed that pandemic-related revenue declines necessitated a 20% reduction in financial support for grantees in 2021-2022. EPIC has addressed this shortfall by securing a new donation equivalent to the grant reduction.

## LESSONS LEARNED

2021

\* The need for new revenue sources to support Youth Peer & Outreach invariably results in seeking one-time grants for novel activities. While these activities have consistently enhanced the services offered, they have had little impact on longer-term sustainability. A lesson from this revenue quest is that EPIC needs to limit short-term projects to activities which either assist partner organizations or innovate features which merit permanent adoption. This is likely to require additional funding to be sustainable. The Parents PEACE Program, art, and guitar instruction are examples of one-time projects which became imbedded in Youth Peer many years ago. Outreach has operated only for 4 years, but has evolved into a permanent 3-site extension of the Youth Peer Program because of its demonstrated merit in addressing the needs of under-served communities.

\* Constraints on program participation, whether due to increased transportation costs or health-protective in-person adaptations, can compromise program impact if they dim the program's focus. We have learned that countervailing actions can always be pursued to keep the charity's mission from wavering. In the midst of Covid-related limitations, we anticipated unavoidable reductions in total tutor-mentor matches for the year. We are actively collaborating with partners to ensure that, once the crisis recedes, our numbers will rebound. We also recognize that leadership demands tireless innovation to nurture program resiliency, regardless of challenges faced.

\* Fostering program partnerships with like-minded community organizations through interactions similar to those of a large family, incurs power dynamics and sibling rivalries as well as validation and mutual support. We have learned that effective partnership is more than a delicate balancing act; it also needs to reflect a laser-focus on the maximization of positive impact for all beneficiaries.

\* In the past few years, EPIC has developed several evaluation tools. SYRA (**S**creen for **Y**outh **R**isk **A**ttraction) enables EPIC to identify and prioritize the most marginalized youth for intake into Youth Peer & Outreach. We have learned that many of the identified risk indicators are not amenable to measurable change. For example, once a youth "*has witnessed victimization of other family members or has been placed in foster care,*" they cannot undo those experiences. Recognizing that staff can only assess the behaviours they observe and not the baggage associated with them, we developed SEGWAY (**S**ocial **E**motional **G**rowth & **W**ellness **A**ssessment of **Y**outh). Now, after 4 years of field-testing, we have learned that Youth Peer & Outreach results vary significantly on an individual basis but fall within a narrow positive range on a group basis, regardless of the site or year. We believe this reflects consistent excellence in the staff hired and youth volunteers trained. We can now project that Youth Peer participants, over the course of any school-year, will demonstrate a 15-30% improvement in socially adaptive behaviours. However, in this pandemic year, we have also come to acknowledge the Heisenberg effect on evaluation – the unintended bias of staff doing the assessment and the observation of changes that are likely to be partly attributable to other sources. With this insight, we now consider a raw score of 40/40 to mean 50% change rather than 100%.

\* We have come to believe that, beyond thoughtful leadership, the real magic of EPIC's programs comes from relationships built within environments that encourage older youth to keep volunteering to be nice to younger marginalized kids, and that enable recipients to look forward every week to feelings of support and acceptance.

# SCHOLARSHIPS VOLUNTEERISM AND HUMANITY AWARDS

2021

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Beyond its school-year community programs, EPIC actualizes its mission to advance marginalized learners by providing scholarships. The first scholarship was awarded in 1997 with multiple scholarships awarded since 2002.

The scholarships are provided under the following criteria:

*“Awarded by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to further the education of a graduating student distinguished by high school staff for commitment to community or perseverance in overcoming obstacles to advancement”*

Each of the following students received EPIC’s \$500 Scholarship in 2021:

- |                    |                        |                               |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Jacob Basque     | Eskasoni First Nation  | Allison Bernard Memorial High |
| • Farrah Christmas | Membertou First Nation | Sydney Academy                |
| • Madison Walcott  | African-NS Community   | Sydney Academy                |
| • Breagh Gillis    | *Rural Community       | *Riverview Rural High         |

*\* This is the first year of the Rural Community scholarship – sponsored by a generous donor, enabling EPIC to celebrate Riverview’s role as EPIC’s largest source of volunteers.*

## VOLUNTEERISM AWARDS

EPIC initiated the EPIC Volunteerism Awards in 2012 in recognition of the volunteer contribution of post-secondary students in service placements in which they have assisted tremendously with Youth Peer, Outreach, and Online. An award has been issued annually to Cape Breton University and Nova Scotia Community College graduates ever since.

The volunteerism awards are provided under the following criteria:

*“Presented by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to a graduating post-secondary student distinguished for outstanding volunteerism beyond course requirements”*

The following student received EPIC’s \$500 Volunteerism Award in 2021:

- |                              |                        |                   |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| • MacKenna King              | Cape Breton University | Community Studies |
| • <i>deferred until fall</i> | NSCC - Marconi         | Social Services   |

## HUMANITY AWARD

Vincent Waterman served on EPIC’s Board for 20 years and was an extraordinary friend and exceptional giver to the community before he passed away in January, 2019. As an ongoing legacy suggested by his sister-in-law and former Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis, EPIC initiated the Vincent Waterman Humanity Award in collaboration with Cape Breton County high school guidance counsellors who nominate an award finalist from each of 5 high schools.

The humanity award is provided under the following criteria:

*“Awarded by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to a graduating high school student for exemplifying Patriarch Vincent Waterman’s boundless community giving and treatment of others as winners of the human race”*

The following student received the \$500 Vincent Waterman EPIC Humanity Award in 2021:

- |              |              |               |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Emily Snow | Sydney Mines | Memorial High |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|

## **MANAGEMENT TEAM PARTNERS**

2021

EPIC oversees the finances and daily operations of Youth Peer, Youth Peer Outreach, Youth Peer Online, and Parents PEACE, in partnership with 34 community agencies who refer high-risk kids, volunteers, and/or caregivers to the programs, network to enhance the community's services, and offer advice to ensure the smooth dovetailing of EPIC's programs with other community supports. The Management Team meets quarterly, while staff and referring partner representatives are in regular contact, often on a daily basis.

The following 34 community partner agencies continue to serve on the Management Team:

- Island Community Justice
- Salvation Army
- Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education
- Nova Scotia Legal Aid
- Nova Scotia Community Services - Child Welfare
- Nova Scotia Health Authority Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Cape Breton University - Career Services
- Black Educators Association
- Membertou Education
- Nova Scotia Correctional Services
- Cape Breton Regional Police
- Transition House
- Whitney Pier Boys and Girls Club
- Native Council
- Centre Scolaire Etoile de l'Acadie
- Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
- Family Place Resource Centre
- Nova Scotia Community College - Marconi Campus
- YMCA of Cape Breton
- Association For Safer Cape Breton Communities
- Adult Literacy Association of Cape Breton County
- SchoolsPlus
- CaperBase Access 808
- Nova Scotia Public Health
- Ally Centre of Cape Breton
- Housing First
- Cape Breton Centre for Sexual Health
- Cornerstone Cape Breton
- Cape Breton Youth Project
- Undercurrent Youth Centre
- IWK Mental Health and Addictions
- Northside Employment & Resource Centre
- Five Eleven Youth and Family Center

# REVENUE SOURCES

2021

## Core Funding

Law Foundation of Nova Scotia



## Multiple Years

United Way Cape Breton



Nova Scotia Community Services



Nova Scotia Justice



Nova Scotia Education & Early Childhood Development



Nova Scotia Health

Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia



Intact Foundation



Bluenose Insurance



Sydney Credit Union



Individual Unsolicited Donors

## Canadian National Awards

William H Donner - highest award... 2010 and 2013

Donner Canadian Foundation - 6 years... 2007-2013

Peter F Drucker Foundation - 2012



## YOUTH PEER STAFF

### DIRECTOR

#### Delores Feltmate



Delores was an elementary/middle school teacher & guidance counsellor for many years, fostered 11 children including 1 she adopted, and is known as a leader in Nova Scotia child advocacy. She became Youth Peer Co-Director in 2014, but retired the following year with health challenges. We were thrilled when her prognosis improved and she returned full-time as Director in 2018. She generates a positive team-building atmosphere and demonstrates extraordinary compassion and finesse making marginalized youth feel accepted and supported.

### VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR

#### Michelle McGean



Michelle became Volunteers Coordinator in 2019 having distinguished herself previously as a tutor-mentor volunteer. In the role of Volunteers Coordinator, she recruits and manages youth participant matching with tutor-mentor volunteers. Her NSCC Social Services graduation with honours augments her open-minded, caring, and gentle personality working with youth, volunteers, and staff to ensure smoothly functioning program activities and relationships. She brings to Youth Peer a natural calmness, maturity, and outstanding organizational skills.

### EDUCATOR

#### Sarah Landry



Sarah became Youth Peer Educator in 2018 after several years teaching in Cape Breton junior/senior high schools specializing in French. She is exceptionally thorough in providing resources to assist high-risk youth and their volunteers, while balancing Youth Peer with the needs of her young family and with new mothers to whom she offers childbirth and parenting classes. Her program insights, humour, and attunement to student needs make her greatly appreciated by youth, volunteers, and other staff.

### OUTREACH COORDINATOR

#### Anna George



Anna became Outreach Coordinator in 2019 after 2 years as an outstanding tutor-mentor volunteer. She is highly skilled in multi-tasking and coordinating programs in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside. She sustains a positive outlook when crises are encountered and works seamlessly with Outreach Assistant Kaitlyn O'Neill to recruit volunteers, contact parents, organize activities, provide nutrition, create a healthy learning environment, and make youth and volunteers feel valued.

### OUTREACH EDUCATOR

#### Anne Pentecost



Anne became familiar to EPIC as a Math Coach Specialist for Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre For Education. Staff were so pleased with her expert advice and supportive style that she was asked and agreed to become the Outreach Educator for 2019-2020. She now attends tutor sessions for Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside sites and develops personalized resources to fulfill youth needs. Her presence greatly enhances program focus and student advancement.

## **YOUTH PEER, OUTREACH, & ONLINE PROGRAM ASSISTANTS**

Youth Peer, Outreach, & Online Program Assistant staff are all post-secondary students who first distinguished themselves as outstanding tutor-mentor volunteers. Program Assistants Jennifer Nicholson and Riley Gardiner and Outreach Assistants Kendrick Miller and Kaitlyn O'Neill, brought great enthusiasm and empathy to the onsite programs, endearing them to participants, volunteers, and staff, and ensuring wonderful experiences from arrival through tutoring, nutritional breaks, and mentoring. As health protocols shifted many students to Zoom, Destiny Green became the Online Coordinator aided by Online Assistants Kendrick Miller and Brenna Riome. In the fall, Kendrick will move into the role of Volunteers Coordinator as Michelle McGean journeys into life as a new full-time mother.

### **ART INSTRUCTOR**

#### **Susanne Donovan**



Susanne has been the Art Instructor since art was introduced to the program in 2002. Susanne provides youth and their mentors with a wide range of fun, enriching and educational creative activities two afternoons a week. She holds a Fine Arts degree from Mt. Allison University in New Brunswick. Her imaginative projects engage even the kids who think they lack artistic talent and all participants feel encouraged and honoured.

### **MUSIC INSTRUCTOR**

#### **Emile Conn**



Emile has been teaching guitar, harmonica, and keyboard at Youth Peer since 2004. He provides private instruction to any interested student along with the tutor-mentor, two afternoons a week for Youth Peer. His quiet demeanor is calming to the participants and his strong musical skills draw in kids to explore their own musical talents. For several of the students, Emile's gentle instruction entices them to attend the program more consistently which enhances their advancement academically as well as socially.

## **PARENTS PEACE STAFF**

### **FACILITATOR**

#### **Ann McPhee**



Ann became Parents PEACE Facilitator in 2016. She began her career as a high school teacher, but served as Executive Director of the Ann Terry Society for over 25 years overseeing projects focused on women's employment. She is highly skilled in designing, developing, delivering, and tailoring programs for adult learners that address challenges faced by the caregivers of children at high risk. Her easy rapport with parents, wealth of experience, and extensive community connections contribute greatly to participant confidence and adaptiveness and to the enhancement of parent-child relationships.

## YOUTH PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

EPIC's programs engage high-risk marginalized youth ages 8-18 and caregivers of all ages who strive to improve relationships with their troubled children. All activities involve 1-to-1 matching or small group interactions. Aside from Youth Peer Outreach Programs for youth ages 10-16 in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside, all activities take place at the Youth Peer Centre, downstairs from the Sydney Adult High School. It is a safe haven in which participants and volunteers feel mutually accepted, valued, and treated like family. Youth tutor-mentors have volunteered from Grade 9 through university, claiming that the program has been as fulfilling for them as it has been for the kids they've assisted. Staff, who have also served as volunteers, consider it a magical place to work because they consistently feel they are able to witness their own impact in helping struggling youth to improve their lives.



The following quotes reflect commonly expressed feelings about the Youth Peer Centre:

*"I never used to trust people because I was bullied a lot. When I lashed out at the ones who threatened me, that brought the authorities and Mental Health crashing down on me. Youth Peer helped me overcome what I thought was impossible. Without Youth Peer support, I would never have completed high school, gone on to secure a trade, and gotten better control of my life. I'm lucky I was part of it."*

~ former Youth Peer participant ~



*"Parents PEACE has been my lifeline - the place where I can go for help. Everything said is kept confidential so I can be very open and leave feeling better than when I came. My daughters have reading disabilities and severe anxieties. Youth Peer has been a godsend, helping them work independently with confidence."*

~ former Parents PEACE participant whose children attended Youth Peer ~



*“Youth Peer forever changed my life, as a volunteer then as a hired Program Assistant. My leadership was sharpened and I became more positive with an open, accepting mind. No job was ever more challenging yet so rewarding. Such wonderful people and such an amazing program.”*

~ young teacher and former Youth Peer tutor-mentor volunteer and Program Assistant ~

